**John Day Drawdown Phase I Study**
**Public Information Meeting**
**Pasco, Washington**
**February 25, 1999**

**Col. Robert Slusar**: I'd like to again welcome everybody here and for taking time out of your busy schedule to be with us.

I'm Col. Bob Slusar, the District Commander for Portland District, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. As I was explaining a little bit earlier, I report to a general officer who is the Commander of the Northwestern Division and there's five districts in the Northwestern Division: Portland District, Seattle District, Walla Walla District, Omaha District and Kansas City District.

The reason why I'm here tonight is because John Day project is part of and under the operation and control of Portland District. I'm headquartered out of Portland, Oregon. There's John Day, The Dalles, and Bonneville are the three projects that we maintain on the Columbia River. Walla Walla District maintains operation control of McNary, and the lower Snake projects, and Seattle District has responsibility for Chief Joe. So that's kind of the way we're broken out here in terms of some of the hydropower and the dams that are under the Corps control.

The reason why I have a team here tonight is that is we're going to cover three areas with you and those areas are first to talk about the project that we're looking at and the process that we're looking at this Phase I initiative at John Day. And we'll go through that process. I'll have Stuart in just a few minutes walk you through that process.

The second reason is to hear your comments. This is the sixth, public forum we've done in the last three weeks on this subject, and we're trying to get again your comments and your concerns so we can pass that on.

And the third and probably the most important reason is to try and get to two different basic issues. One, the benefits and the impacts if we look at a drawdown of John Day. And so if there's studies, resolutions, something that you know about that we haven't included in our study since we only have a one-year timeframe to put this study together and report back to Congress, we're looking for a lot of information that may have already been done and as we've gone through these public meetings, we've received a lot of good input.

Tonight I have two individuals on my left, your right, that'll be walking us through the process. On my far left is Eric Ostrovsky. Eric is a member of the National Marine Fisheries Service, and he represents the federal biologist in the study, and he'll be talking about kind of the big picture, what National Marine Fisheries is looking at here in the Pacific Northwest and the salmon issues.

On my immediate left is Stuart Stanger. He is my project manager. He represents the federal engineers, as we are the operational managers of these projects. He'll be talking about the study, the timelines for the study, the inputs that we need for the study and how you can help us develop and review this study so that we can report it back to Congress. And he'll introduce his team over here that he has working for him. So again, I want to thank you for being here tonight.

I'm going to turn the mike over to Stuart, let him do some introductory comments and we'll get on with the meeting.

**Stuart Stanger**: Good evening. I want to also thank you for coming. We are looking for information and would like you to comment tonight. Before we get started, I just want to tell you that we know that there are people in this room who are all for drawdown and you're ready to take the dam out. We also know that there are a lot of you here who are opposed to the dams being taken out. We have not made a decision one way or another. We're not trying to decide whether to take John Day Dam out. We are looking at whether or not detailed studies need to be done to consider taking John Day Dam down.

We know this is a very, very sensitive issue. We hope that none of you are intimidated by others in the room and that you will speak freely, and we want to hear all of those comments.

We are only doing Phase I, as the Colonel has indicated, and I'll explain to you what Phase I involves, but we do not have the authority, the Corps of Engineers does not have the authority, to move into a feasibility study, Phase II, at this time. We're going to look at benefits and costs, as the Colonel indicated, and we will make a recommendation to Congress about Phase II but they will make the ultimate decision.

The people that I'm going to have working on this study to help me come up with a recommendation for the Colonel are on my left here. I have Bob Willis out of the Fish and Wildlife branch, Ed Woodruff is looking at hydropower, Ken Soderlind looking at navigation, Brian Shenk is our economist, John Todd is looking at irrigation and utilities. This is part of my team. We don't have my entire team here, but at the end of this meeting, these guys will be around and if you have additional questions specific to their area, grab them and have a discussion with them. Get some more information. Finally, I want to thank Dawn Edwards; she's out of our public affairs office. She's the one who has set up all these public meetings. This is the last one in a series of six. We've been on the road for about 30 days now, and very stressful for Dawn so we should thank her for this, and I get used to it I guess.

With that, I'm going to turn the mike over to Eric, but before I do that, I want to tell you that tonight you will be given plenty of opportunity for questions and answers and we will ask you to use a microphone because your comments are going to be recorded. Because of that, I'm going to ask that you hold all your questions until Eric is done with his briefing and then I have a very short briefing about 10 to 15 minutes that'll tell you what John Day Dam does provide in the way of benefits today, and we'll also discuss

what this Phase 1 study is going to include, but it's very important that we capture your comments, so I'm going to ask that you hold all your questions and comments until Eric and I are done with our briefings, and then you'll have plenty of opportunity and I'll try and answer all your questions.

With that, I'll turn it over to Eric.

**Eric Ostrovsky**: Thanks, Stuart. When we came into Pasco the other day, it became very obvious real quickly; I've seen some of the signs, "Save Our Dams." On public access TV you know I saw the parade, and I know that the issue has you know very major, especially, if there was a drawdown, it would have impacts on many of you personally. It would have it on the community as a whole, and there is a good question: why would we even suggest studying an action that is this dramatic and if, you know basically everyone realizes that there's a major problem that salmon, a legacy in the Northwest actually on the West Coast, are in major decline.

In the Columbia Basin, it's been estimated that at one time there were somewhere between 10 to 18 million salmon and steelhead that were turned every year and there's been a major decrease in those runs. One of the reasons, and many of you know it well and we've been discussing it, is certain dams like Grand Coulee on the Columbia, in the Snake the Brownlee Complex, became barriers to salmon and the habitat behind it. Major areas were closed off. Other dams where there's still passage around them, the whole issue of the passage itself and the issues with habitat are an issue, but when those dams were being built, there were runs that were lost and you know I know a concern here everyone is saying, "Well, why are you just looking at the dams? Aren't there other issues?"

And there are major issues. There's major issues in the way over the years the hatcheries have been run. Hatchery practices. Harvesting. I know people here have been talking about long nets in the ocean and I know over the years what's happened with drift nets leads and with other fisheries that still go on the incidental take, it's a concern. It has to be looked at. There's habitat impacts from cities, such as Portland and other cities that have grown up in the region and the type of materials and impact they have had too.

I want to say when you look at the overall recovery strategy for salmon, people talk about it is 4 H's and it's true all 4 H's are going to have to be in it if we really recover these wrongs, and I want to also add many people here have been saying there's these major impacts occurring in the ocean and there's always been cyclical impacts but there a lot of processes they're not fully understood and that's having impacts too.

And then what I want to show here is many times when we think of salmon and the Endangered Species Act and what NMFS has asked to be done, we think about Snake River stock in the Columbia Basin. In 1991, Snake River sockeye were the first salmon that were listed, but then soon thereafter fall and spring/summer Chinook were also listed. Recently in 1998, steelhead both in the Columbia Basin and in the Snake Basin were also listed. There's several other listings that are occurring, and I just put those up

here to show that at one time the focus was in one area of the Basin. It's become a much broader look in it and if you can see here, what's really at stake now is there's 13 stocks that are either listed or proposed to be listed in the Basin. When you look at it, most stocks have not done well at all. There are a few exceptions but not many. And if I had made a chart of the whole West Coast, you'd see there's other problems too.

Some gentleman just asked if the Corps is doing any of this work anywhere else. I'm not sure about the Corps, but I know NMFS even at an earlier date has been working on the winter run Chinook in the Sacramento River where there's been a big problem. There's been a lot of work being done with irrigation districts down there, and recently there's been a lot of effort being put into runs in Maine, so there is activity going on out of the region, and I just wanted to let people know that this is not an issue that just affects this one area. It's over a broad area and these salmon range over a broad area.

Well, once the fish were listed under the Endangered Species Act, NMFS gets involved, in this case with the Corps of Engineers, and the other action agencies over the operation of the federal Columbia River power system. In 1995, we consulted on a Biological Opinion basically to make sure that the operations of that system do not jeopardize the continued existence of these species or the habitat upon which they depend. And as other fish are being listed, we have to look at that too.

What we, in that case, it was decided that there would be a reasonable and prudent alternative was considered to be a jeopardy opinion in order to allow the system to continue to operate. In that RPA, or the reasonable and prudent alternative, there were reasonable and prudent measures, and the objective is to make sure that they're all implemented. Some of those and strategically what's really been going on here is some people say all you do and the federal agents do is study this stuff. You study it to death, and you're allowing the fish to go into extinction as it's being done. Well back in 1995, one of the problems that people realized, at least with the migration of the juvenile salmon, is there are basically two ways that they could go down the river, inriver or being transported by barge, and so the Biological Opinion looked at some of the immediate measures that could be done to help those fish both ways, put in some major structural modifications, some of them have been very expensive.

As we learn more things about the salmon, I've got a few slides I'll show you some of the ways that we've been trying to do that, try to come together with people in the region, different agencies and the collaborative method on a long-term decision, on the configuration of the system.

And finally I put down a bullet for adaptive management. There are a lot of things that we didn't know in '95; there's a lot of things that NMFS and the other agencies still don't know, but as operations change, as conditions change, we know more. Some people tonight said you're never going to know enough. And that's true. And we'll never have complete certainty, but as we go on, hopefully, we can make, have enough to make some reasoned decisions about all these impacts that I know are very important.

What I wanted to show was some of the immediate improvements that are going on. We have flow targets that we're trying to meet in the river right now. What we really try to do there is during the migration season on the smolts, basically, we try to get water to the fish as they're migrating downstream. Also to make sure in certain areas to cool down the river and through operations we can do a little of that to help improve the transport for smolts. And this can be beneficial both for fish that are going to travel inriver all the way down or even if we barge them.

Improved bypass. It's very difficult and probably the least successful way for migrating smolts to go down river is going to be through the turbines and through the bypass systems. These fish can either be taken around the turbines back into the rivers or they can be put on, into a transportation system and then be barged or trucked. You want to keep smolts out of the turbines. Another way to do it is have more spill at the dams and in our Biological Opinion, we have spill regimes and they go on every year and we change them in certain projects all the time. But that's a way also to try to increase the success of fish that are going to travel in the river. We've been improving the transportation system. Very recently, the Independent Scientific Advisory Board said we should be doing more barging than trucking and they thought for certain reasons like implanting and so forth it's a better way to do it. It's more costly but we look at it and under both methods, we're trying to get better operations to help get the fish down the system. Also, trying to increase peak turbine efficiency in our Biological Opinion, we're saying, during the migration season, we want the turbines running at one percent of peak efficiency. It helps juveniles as they're going through the turbines. We've also asked and the Corps is putting in fish friendlier turbines. One's going in right now in Bonneville Dam. There's more on the way.

There are many other immediate improvements, but I just wanted to mention some to let you know that not everything we're doing is studying because we do need to save fish so when we get into a more long-term configuration, there's still fish around that can benefit from it.

Some of the structural changes, the first one I mentioned is the gas abatement program. We've been putting in what's called flip lips, or spill deflectors so when water does get spilled and that could be voluntary or involuntary spills, it won't be as much total dissolved gas in the system, which can be very harmful to juvenile fish, so by limiting it, we can have more spills. We want to regulate the system that way, and if there's involuntary spill, which happens during, most spring thaws, it's a way of keeping gas down.

Extended screens are one of the ways in which the juvenile migrants can be put into a bypass system. Again, they could go then into; they can be transported through the system or taken around by barge. There's been sampling facilities put in many of the projects. There's one in by John Day now. These have been very helpful. As I said in '95, there wasn't a lot of information and more needs to be done about what's happening at any of the projects and in all the projects, as you go down them. And by putting in

more monitoring facilities, it's giving us a better idea of how the migrants are actually doing.

I also wanted to mention relocating the outfall at Bonneville Dam. What was happening there was when we were sending smolts through the system, they were coming out in an area where there was very low flow. And there was very heavy predation. I mean, it's sort of what is going on. I mean why were we trying to save fish and then bringing them up as a meal to northern pikeminnow or they're sometimes known as squawfish, so what we've done is we've relocated that outfall so it's now in an area of the river where the current is much quicker and hopefully they'll be a lot less predation there.

Again, I just wanted to mention those are just some of the modifications. There are a lot going on at any time. As I mentioned, some of the fish go down the system inriver. Under the Biological Opinion, depending on the stock but on all stock it was felt that you know the fish, there's already a system in there. It's not in the natural river, and it's difficult to tell and there's been a lot of debate over how fish are going to do. Whether they should go inriver or they should be transported. And basically, as I say, they go both ways and the idea is what kind of survivals can we get inriver. It's going to change every year. It's going to change which stock you're looking at and the conditions those years. If there's a lot of water, generally the fish are going to do better. We transport quite a few fish, too. Subyearling fall Chinook later in the year under the Biological Opinion, we try to transport every fish that we're able to collect because currently transport is the best way for those fish to get down the system. And you would want to look at both of them together and see, if you look at both systems, I mean what is your rate of return. How successful can you be with those fish under conditions that are always changing?

And then beyond that, we have as I mentioned before, we've been putting new systems in the river all the time. How are those changing what's currently going on? And finally when we did the Biological Opinion, we knew a lot of the information was not there. And whether you call for a drawdown, and a lot of people felt that drawing down some of the dams would be important, it's a system. There's still other dams that would still be in the system. Is that the best way to go?

Well, nobody knew at the time but you know it's been felt that it's worth looking at, looking at the feasibility both to see from a scientific standpoint what would be the benefits of it and also importantly what the economic impacts of that would be. Most of you are aware of the study that's going on in the lower Snake, and that was in the 1995 Biological Opinion. In the 1998 supplemental opinion after steelhead were listed, the National Marine Fisheries Service said that we should take a look at John Day, both the natural river and spillway crest and that's actually what has been the genesis of the study or the Phase 1 part of the study today.

Some of the potential benefits of drawdown is that it allows for faster water velocity for a given flow and faster water velocity generally tends to relate to fish travel time, at least for fall Chinook, it tends to promote smolt survival. And that's why we would look at drawdown as an option. The Independent Science Group, it's now known as the

Independent Scientific Advisory Board, but it is a group of scientists that advise both NMFS and the Northwest Power Planning Council said in their report "Return to the River," that we should evaluate restoring some of the areas that have been inundated by the dams. They thought that it could make a more normative area for especially fish like fall Chinook but other migrating fish for a rearing area for them. Right now Snake River fall Chinook primarily spend most of their days in reservoirs, which is different than the natural condition.

One of the other benefits to a drawdown, especially for John Day, that we would want to look at in potential benefits, let me say, would be that it would expose historic area where upriver bright fall Chinook salmon used to be. I just wanted to emphasize that these are not listed fish, it's not Snake River salmon. This would not be a mandate of the Endangered Species Act, but at least it's been estimated that 30,000, in fact, I heard recently that it was probably more likely 34,000, fish spawned in that area that is now inundated by John Day pool. If there were a drawdown, you know, maybe at least you would want to consider what impacts would that have. Would there be any chance of bringing those spawning areas back, and it would be looked at.

Finally, I just wanted to mention that I don't want you to have the idea that John Day Dam is the problem. You know what I wanted to say before is the problem is a whole series of things. There's 4 H's but also when you're just looking at mainstem, you have a whole series of dams. If it's Snake River fish, it's likely going to have to go through eight dams if it migrates inriver. If it's steelhead that is currently listed in the upper Columbia, it could be going through nine dams, and many of those dams are not federal dams. And the idea here is and what you would want to look at with John Day is you're instituting other changes. Are changes going to be needed? Is drawdown going to be needed to achieve the likelihood of recovery and survival standards? And so saying there are cumulative impacts, so I just wanted sort of as a final word to say from a biological standpoint, you don't want to look at the project and the impacts as that project alone. You have to look at it in a much broader system with a lot of things happening to it.

**Stuart Stanger**: Thanks, Eric. It just takes a minute for this new file to come up. What I'm going to talk to you tonight about and it's just going to take me about 10 maybe 15 minutes, probably 10, is I'm going to describe to you briefly what John Day project provides right now, and what you need to realize is the things I describe are all at risk of being impacted to varying degrees if we draw down, and we can talk in detail about whichever area you want. I'm going to describe to you what the study is and what it is not. I'm going to describe the study purpose. I'm going to talk about the schedule, and finally, I'm going to tell you how you can get involved in the study.

I think all of you know where John Day Dam is. John Day Dam was completed in 1968, so it's been in operation just over 30 years. It's about 59 hundred feet long, just over a mile. John Day Dam is one of two dams on the Columbia that has authorized flood control. Five hundred thousand-acre feet of flood control storage are provided at John Day. It provides 2200 megawatts of power. About 9 million tons a year of cargo are shipped through the navigation lock. There are 14 recreation sites developed along the

John Day pool, and if any of you have any specific questions about recreation tonight, we're missing our senior technical lead tonight who is also the recreation expert, Chris Ferguson, but if you have any specific questions for recreation, there's a sign-up sheet back here. We also have Mark Eddings out of The Dalles that can try and answer some questions. If he can't answer them adequately, please leave your name and a phone number, and we'll have Chris call you and get you your answers.

Irrigation. There are 29 irrigation pump stations on the John Day pool. There are municipal and industrial users of the water out of John Day. Irrigon, Umatilla fish hatcheries use water out of John Day pool. The Umatilla Wildlife Refuge would be impacted significantly by a drawdown. Both upstream and downstream fish passage facilities at John Day would be impacted as well as the adult ladders at McNary Dam. John Day Dam does back water up to McNary Dam so if you draw John Day down, the pool level below McNary drops.

The study. Phase I, and that is all we are authorized to do as we've indicated a couple of times already. We want to answer the question, is it appropriate to continue further studies? Is drawdown of John Day even an alternative that is worth further consideration? Phase I will not provide enough information that anyone could make a decision to draw down. That's not its purpose. It's to take a quick look using basically existing information, and we will make a recommendation to Congress -- whether or not we think a feasibility study, a more detailed study should be done.

If Congress authorizes us to do Phase II, we would begin scoping. We do not have a scope of Phase II, and we would not develop that without Congressional authority, and then it would be a public scoping process and we would be back here talking to you about what we should include, what is important to include in that study. It would include an environmental impact statement.

Phase I is going to look at four alternatives, natural river with flood control, natural river without flood control, spillway crest with and without flood control, and I'll explain those as best I can.

Some of you may have picked up a cross-section; it's an 8-1/2 by 11 sheet looks similar to this. Right now, normal operating pool for John Day is at elevation 265. When we have our forecast that there's going to be high runoff, which generally happens in spring time, we can draw the pool down to what is called minimum operating pool, elevation 257, so that when the floodwaters get to John Day, we can stop them from going downstream and we pond water and release it slowly in a controlled fashion. So when we're talking with and without flood control, spillway crest is at elevation 215. That would be the normal operating pool level. If a flood event were coming, we would pond water 30 to 40 feet deep to control that flood using the existing spillway. And natural river, to get to natural river, elevation 165, we're talking about total removal of the spillway, and the navigation lock and probably a portion of the north bank. So in order to provide flood control now, I have to provide a new way to stop that water, and the way to do that is reconstruct a new spillway, not at this level but at this level. So I would

remove the existing spillway, put a new spillway back in so that when a flood event came I could close the gates, pond the water, and then release it gradually.

So those are four alternatives we're looking at, and we'll develop some cost estimates for those four.

For study purposes, we laid it out for Congress. We said we will evaluate the potential fishery and wildlife impacts. We'll evaluate the social and economic impacts, and we will provide Congress a recommendation.

So, how are we going to look at the fisheries and wildlife impacts? We, a few years ago, were looking at lowering the John Day pool to minimum operating pool level, that's elevation 257, that's, normal operation is at 265. We were looking at going to 257. We had initiated several biological studies when Congress stopped the study of minimum operating pool. We also stopped the biological studies. We will re-initiate and complete some of those studies that were begun. Some of the data was already collected, and it just wasn't analyzed and we will be doing that.

In addition, we're going to be doing some additional studies. We'll be releasing some pit-tagged fish and determining how long fish do stay in the John Day pool, whether predation is a problem. We will be using a process that some of you have probably heard about called the PATH process, Plan for Analyzing and Testing Hypotheses. We will be using that similar process to what they're using on the Snake River study.

And in addition, we're forming a Planning Aid Team. The Planning Aid Team is something we proposed to Congress in our scope and they agreed to it, and if the public wants to participate on that team, there is a sign-up sheet. It'll be at the back of the room after the meeting. You can sign up and participate as a planning team member. The Planning Aid Team will look at the biological study results and make assessments as to whether they think the impacts are positive or negative to fish and wildlife.

In addition, the Planning Aid Letter, something that we would normally under any study get from U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, will be prepared for this study. U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in conjunction with both or all of the states and National Marine Fisheries Service and the Corps, will assess what they believe the impacts to both fish and wildlife are, both warmwater fish and anadromous fish and it'll be included in a Planning Aid Letter and provided to the Corps of Engineers with recommendations for what would be potential requirements for mitigation.

Social and economic effects. How will we analyze that? All of these things that I hope you had a chance to look at before the meeting and all the things I talked about that John Day Dam provides will be impacted in some way if we draw down. We will evaluate and estimate what the cost would be to replace those things that would be lost. An example I'll use tonight, let's pick irrigation pumps. If I lower the John Day pool and an irrigation pump station will no longer work, I will figure out, or this team will figure out and tell me, what it would cost to replace that pump station to provide the same service at a lower

level down by the new pool or some other way to get water for irrigation, whether it be through canals down each side of the John Day pool. They will look at some method of providing water. They will also consider whether or not it would be worth providing that pump station or would it be cheaper to not farm that land, okay? We'll do tradeoff analyses amongst those options, buy-out, new pump station, canals down the north side and south side of the pool, and we would evaluate which one is the least cost and that would be all these impacted areas. The least cost alternative to each one would be added up, and you could say that would be the least cost to replace all the things that would be impacted, okay?

Employment effects. Obviously, if the alternative for that pump station scenario was to buy that farmer out, that farmer no longer has a job. That's an employment effect. Okay? We will evaluate those. And also, that's a huge impact on quality of life for that farmer, okay? So that example for the farmer, you know that applies to navigation, that applies to a number of these things you see around the room.

Other things that need to be considered at John Day, not quite as big of an impact if you will, financial impact, are the adult and juvenile fish passage facilities. There's a cost associated with replacing those. There are, we have identified 37 utilities, sewer outfalls, intakes, telephone, power lines, that could be impacted by a drawdown, and we will look at what it would cost to protect or replace those.

There are approximately 360 known cultural resource sites under the water at John Day right now. And when we lower the pool, something would have to be done to those cultural resource sites to protect them or recover them. Water quality is a big issue. There's been a lot of sediment deposited at the mouths of the rivers running into the John Day pool at the dam itself and all of that sediment once it is exposed could have impacts on the water quality. Hazardous and toxic waste. A lot of the sediment could be contaminated. There may also be sites that were potential radioactive toxic waste sites, HTRW we refer to it as, that were covered with water when we backed water up behind John Day. Thirty years ago, this country was not as sensitive to HTRW as we are today, so we will identify any potential sites that may be uncovered, and those would need to be addressed if you exposed them.

Our schedule. Right now we are on schedule to have a draft report completed in September of this year. We began this study in October of '98 and we will have a draft, we'll go out for public comment and review, and if you signed up on the sheet back there as you came in the door, we will send you a copy of the report and you can review and comment on it. We will look at your comments, make whatever changes we need to the report. We will include your comments in the report, and we will submit a recommendation to Congress in December '99. That's our current schedule.

This is the final public meeting. We've had one in Juneau, Alaska. One in Helena, Montana. Lewiston. One in Portland. We were in Umatilla on Tuesday and the final meeting is here tonight.

Okay, in summary. The Corps of Engineers will be making a recommendation regarding further study. We will not be making a recommendation or decision regarding drawdown. That could only come out of a Phase II feasibility study which would evaluate other alternatives for salmon recovery as opposed to simply looking at draw down. Congress will make the final decision about whether Phase II is done and if you want to get involved, sign up on the Planning Aid Team sign-up sheet in the back of the room and review and comment on our Phase I report. Or Col. Slusar over here would be happy to receive a letter from you with your comments if you don't feel comfortable making them tonight. or after reviewing the report, and he will make sure I see that letter. Okay? I think that's all.

Let me just real quickly point out, if I can find my pointer again, that what we know now is that in order to draw down to natural river, we would be removing this section of the spillway, the entire spillway, and probably excavating a large channel around the navigation lock. We may leave the navigation lock simply because it would be very expensive to remove all that concrete but it would be of no value.

Okay, with that, we're going to open this up to questions.

This is not a formal hearing, but we will ask you to use a mike so that we can get your comments recorded and transcribed and they will be included in the report. With that, if we have microphones ready, we will start.

**Pat Tucker**: Is this live? My name is Pat Tucker and I'm a farmer on the John Day pool. We have a pump station you've been talking about tonight. I'm here tonight representing the Columbia/Snake River Irrigators. I have one quick question and then I have comments. You're going to have a draft report out in September? Will that draft report have your recommendation in it or does the recommendation to Congress come in the final report?

**Stuart Stanger**: Pat, if it's up to me, it will include a recommendation. That's a hard question to answer because if we don't have all the information available in September, we won't be able to make an assessment. If we're still working on the report in September and we expect to get information in that could impact our decision, the report could go out in September without a recommendation, but my intention at this time is it would include a recommendation of what our recommendation would be.

**Pat Tucker**: I would certainly hope it would have a recommendation and then we can comment on the recommendation also along with the report.

In response to the federal agency requests for comments, the Columbia/Snake River Irrigators Association Board of Directors is providing comments and recommendations to the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Army Corps of Engineers on two issues. Number one, the John Day pool drawdown study and proposal and number two, a formal request for the Corps to initiate a technical and economic study on the implementation of a new water management alternative for the Columbia River Basin. First, I'll address the

John Day pool Phase I drawdown study and proposal. The Columbia/Snake Irrigators Board of Directors have serious concerns surrounding the Corps' John Day pool Phase I study and proposals to draw down the John Day pool. Neither drawdown proposals nor the study of drawdowns are supported by the Columbia/Snake Irrigators. The Columbia/Snake Irrigators are adamantly opposed to Phase I study and any attempt to proceed with a Phase II process. The Columbia/Snake Irrigators further state for the record:

Number One: The Northwest Congressional delegation should stop all further funding for any drawdown or dam breaching studies on the Snake/Columbia River system.

Number Two: It was wrong and incredibly poor public policy for the John Day pool Phase I drawdown study to be funded by Congress. Funding this study represents failed political leadership on the part of the Northwest Congressional leaders.

Number Three: Neither the drawdown study nor the proposed drawdown action is supported by the local residents or state and county elected officials representing the area.

Number Four: The Corp study creates perceived economic risk impacts where financial institutions and lenders are hesitant to proceed with economic development projects within the area. The study itself creates economic impacts to the local area, perceived risk impacts effecting financial investment and economic development. The study is creating negative economic impacts to the local area.

Number Five: The social and economic disruption posed by a drawdown is unacceptable to the local communities and to the Pacific Northwest Region. The impacts to power, navigation, flood control and recreation are significant and unacceptable.

Number Six: The Oregon and Washington governors should aggressively oppose any further drawdown studies or proposed actions. The governors must display explicit political leadership on the drawdown proposals.

Number Seven: The credibility of the Corps is rapidly diminishing by bringing forward these totally impractical drawdown studies. The Corps is beginning to lack credibility as competent resource managers. The Corps must stop further work on any drawdown proposals.

Number Eight: The Corps of Engineers is wasting salmon recovery money by conducting the John Day pool drawdown study. The Corps is simply becoming a part of the salmon recovery industry, interested in operations money and not sound resource management.

Number Nine: The John Day pool drawdown study is a major distraction away from pursuing real salmon recovery actions.

Number Ten: The Corps has spent almost ten years on six major studies for salmon recovery. During this same period of time, what has been done by the Corps to engage in studies and programs to benefit the future economic vitality of the region?

Now I want to address the request for the Corps to review a new water management alternative. The Corps should refocus its technical analysis away from drawdown proposals and place attention on pragmatic and workable measures for salmon recovery and for the benefit of the Pacific Northwest economy. We specifically request that the Corps initiate actions to proceed with the technical and economics review of the attached

proposal which I'll be giving the Colonel, for a new water management alternative for the Columbia River Basin. This new water management alternative would call for:

Number One: Restructuring the existing fish flow targets and augmentation program, based on water policy, hydrology, biological and economic justifications contained within the attached technical information.

Two: Re-regulating the hydro system, producing additional hydroelectric power and revenues.

Three: Identifying within the tributaries new water resources projects including new water storage projects, opportunities for water marketing and transfers and selected water efficiency measures.

Four: Applying the new water resource projects to bring about fish, economic and recreational benefits.

Five: Encouraging tribal participation in the development of new water storage projects by allowing them to become equity partners.

Now, very specifically, the Corps should initiate an internal preliminary scoping review to assess water management review tasks and prepare a detailed budget for the study. Two, they should prioritize its funding request to Congress to give preference for the water management review study and, three, formally submit the review study request and budget to Congress for immediate funding.

It is further recommended to the Corps that they provide the Columbia/Snake Irrigators and the Eastern Oregon Irrigators Boards of Directors with a formal reply to this study request so that the associations may inform Congress of the Corps' progress in complying with this important constituency request. Thank you.

**Stuart Stanger**: Thank you. Yeah. If you have a copy of that, pass it to the Colonel. We'll look at that, and we will respond.

**Charles Dawsey**: Yes, my name is Charles Dawsey and I'm the General Manager of Benton REA. We're an electric cooperative serving a large part of Benton and Yakima County. Certainly, we're concerned about the impacts that the study could have with the John Day, but by now, all in attendance certainly know that Benton REA and its governing board is adamantly opposed to drawdown or the breaching of dams on the Columbia River or its tributaries. Therefore, I'm not going to repeat comments which you've already heard and that we have made before. It's interesting to note that at many of these hearings, the comments are provided by individuals from this generation. Unfortunately we hear few comments from those individuals from the next generation. Ladies and gentlemen, tonight we have a unique opportunity to hear from these individuals representing the next generation of leaders who must live with the consequences of any decisions that will be made on these most important issues. These individuals will be speaking in behalf of Benton REA tonight. As such, I would like to surrender any of my remaining time to the 1999 Benton REA scholarship recipients who as part of that process were required to investigate and report on how breaching of John Day Dam would affect our own local communities. With that, I'd like to introduce Peter

Kennberg, who is a senior from Hanford High School; Lori Miller, a senior at Sunnyside High School, and Lindsay Graff, a senior at Sunnyside High School who will present our comments in behalf of Benton REA.

**Peter Kennberg**: There's no longer any barge transport on the Columbia River. There's no longer any hydroelectric power being produced. There are annual floods in the Columbia Basin. There's no longer irrigation water for the farming. Is this the result of some natural disaster? No. This could be the result of what some people are proposing. The breaching of the John Day Dam. This is a catastrophic idea.

What exactly does the breaching of a dam involve, you might ask. The breaching of a dam involves digging channels around the dam so that the river can flow more freely. Portions of the dam are removed and the concrete structures retired along the river's path to bypass the concrete. Why would citizens want to breach the dam? The breaching of dams would be to help save the salmon and to restore the Columbia River to its free flowing state. It is true that we need to do everything in our power to save the salmon from extinction, but the wholesale destruction of dams is an extreme solution. Even if John Day Dam, four dams on the Snake River, were breached as the current proposal suggests, the salmon would still have to contend with two dams downstream and up to eleven dams upstream.

There have been many proposals as to how to save the salmon without breaching the dams. One proposal that has been enacted at some dams is the juvenile bypass system. This is where a screen prevents the salmon from entering the turbines and directs them to a bypass channel. From there the fish are either released at the base of the dam or they are shipped by truck or barge downstream of all the dams.

The purpose of dams is to provide a renewable source of energy, to provide a method for barges to get upstream and to provide the farmers with adequate irrigation and to prevent annual flooding. Any one of these would greatly influence the citizens affected by changes in the manner in which the river was controlled. Due to the fact that dams would no longer be producing hydroelectric power, the citizen's electric rates would increase by about ten percent. Shipping would cease and goods would have to be moved by either rail or truck, making it more expensive to get goods in the Columbia Basin. Also, the water needed to irrigate land would have to be pumped in from other regions, costing the farmer more. These costs would be passed on to the consumers.

A few years ago, the Mississippi had one of its worst floods ever. If the Mississippi could have been dammed, the flooding could have been controlled. The same scenario could happen to the Columbia River, causing millions of dollars worth of damage. The breaching of the dams is a drastic measure that could very easily harm the citizens of the region. The protection of endangered salmon needs to be a top priority, but we also have to realize the price that we pay for these actions. Further studies on this subject would do nothing to help the decisions as to whether or not to breach the John Day Dam. Thank you.

**Lori Miller**: Environmentalists have been pushing the idea of breaching some of the dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers. The breaching of the John Day Dam would have an enormous impact on the Benton Rural Delivery Association and its users. The most drastic effects would be the cost of power to REA and its customers. The John Day Dam is a major contributor of Bonneville Power Administration's power supply. One of the district's powered by John Day Dam is Benton REA. Breaching the dam would result in permanent disruption of power. The people within its service territory would definitely feel its effects, especially during peak demand periods. This power shortage would eventually need to be replaced by other sources, most likely coal fire generating facilities, which would be more expensive and produce air pollutants. The cost of power would increase for REA and its customers.

The economy, in general, would be damaged by the breaching of the John Day Dam. Irrigators who pump from the river might lose their ability to do so due to lower water level. If the farmers lose their water, they will be forced to abandon much of the land that they now farm. The jobs that were supplied by those farmers would be discontinued, and the products that they sold would disappear from the market. Hydroelectric facilities on the Columbia should share some of the responsibility for the decline of fish runs on the river. However, hydro is but one of the factors affecting the decline. Harvest, hatchery and habitat are other factors. The habitat issue deals with the declining quality of river water. The hatchery releases many fish that are not properly conditioned to withstand the rigors of migration.

Harvest is the last factor. Many Japanese and Russian trollers fish off the U.S. and Canadian waters. Canadian and Alaskan fishing fleets may be intercepting our runs. The Washington fleet is a sizable contributor to the coastal economy. The tribal communities hold treaty rights, which guarantee them the right to fish. Finally, sport fishing is a major form of recreation in the Northwest, and fees from license sales are the funding source for the state game department. It's clear that the breaching of the John Day Dam will not cure our environmental problems concerning the salmon. There is very little evidence to support this deceptive notion. In fact, breaching the John Day Dam will create many more problems than it would solve. I believe that there are better alternatives in making the rivers more fish-friendly without destroying our dams.

**Lindsay Graff**: If the John Day Dam was breached, there would be an immense impact on the entire Northwest. The John Day Dam is located at the head of Lake Celilo, 216 miles upstream from the mouth of the Columbia River. Construction of the dam by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began in 1958 and was completed in 1971. At the time of completion, John Day Dam powerhouse was the second largest in the world. Of the twelve hydroelectric powerhouses in the Portland District of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, John Day produces enough energy for two cities the size of Seattle. Based on information from the Corps of Engineers, John Day produces nearly half of all the electricity of the twelve hydroelectric projects in the Portland District. Losing this dam would greatly affect the cheap electricity in the Northwest. Nearly 40% of all electrical energy requirements are produced at the 21 hydroelectric projects in the Pacific Northwest. John Day is a major part of that project. Benton REA, who currently

purchases 75% of its energy from Powerex, a Canadian power supplier, would have heavier competition for power. Other providers of energy who rely on BPA energy would be hunting alternative sources, one of which would be Canadian electricity. Rates would go up for the Benton REA customers. Besides the obvious impact to electric consumers would be the impact on nearly every segment of Benton REA customers' lives.

The 15 recreational areas developed above the dam may be effected by its loss. Many people who rely on these recreational areas for their quick accessibility and ease of use could find that gone. A certain part of Benton REA's customer quality of life would be lost. Flood control systems that are a part of the system of dams of the Columbia River might be threatened if the critical link in the system, such as the John Day Dam, were removed. It was reported that without the current flood control system that the 1964, 1965 flood would have surged over Portland's seawall if the floodwaters had been unregulated by storage.

The power and irrigation needs in many acres of land would be in jeopardy. With agriculture being a major employer in the area, we would see layoffs and higher unemployment. An editorial in the Portland *Oregonian* listed wide-ranging benefits of the Columbia River and the hydropower it produces. Irrigated land makes up 37% of Northwest farmland and produces nearly 75% of Northwest agricultural products. For every two agriculture-related jobs inside the Northwest, one additional job is created outside the region. So you see, not only would the Benton REA's customers see a big change in the price of electricity, quality of life and financial and economics of their area, but also a domino effect would be created that would affect the people across the nation. Breaching the John Day Dam would be a tragic loss to Benton REA customers and the whole Northwest. Thank you.

**Stuart Stanger:** I think all three of them deserve a hand, don't you? Yeah. Those are some pretty factual papers. Go ahead.

**Daren Coppock**: Thank you. My name is Daren Coppock. I represent the Oregon Wheatgrowers League, and while I don't have the authority to represent the Washington Association of Wheatgrowers, I know that their feelings are very much in line with what I will say tonight.

First, let me say thank you to all of the guests that came. I appreciate you coming here where the people are that are going to be impacted by these decisions to have hearings and collect our comments. You asked one of the questions early on was whether this process should proceed to Phase II. The answer is no, and let me give you four reasons why.

Drawdowns are economically ruinous. We've heard a lot of talk tonight about what the power impacts will be. There is ten million tons of cargo in the Columbia/Snake River system each year. Sixty percent of its grain. If you move those commodities to truck and rail, rail shipments are twice as expensive per ton as barge are; truck shipments are four

times as expensive, and so that money, I hate to contradict an earlier speaker, but that will not be passed on to customers, at least in the case of wheat. Wheat prices are established on an international market and that money will come out of the farmer's pocket, not the customer's pocket. The cost of replacement power, the cost of damage to roadways, to industrial and municipal water supplies; the list goes on and on and on about the negative economic impacts drawdowns will cause.

Secondly, drawdowns are biologically hypothetical. The data that supports them comes from models based on assumptions and formulas. There is no empirical evidence to prove that drawdowns will save fish, and the models that are used to make these conclusions are based on the FLUSH model, at least in the PATH process. And in 1998, FLUSH flunked the reality test. Actual fish passage through the system was somewhere around 58%. CRISP estimated it at 52%; FLUSH was at 20%. Not even close. And so until we get better models in place for estimating passage and effects on fish, they're biologically hypothetical.

Thirdly, NMFS own data indicates that they're probably biologically unnecessary. Passage through the system according to NMFS data presented recently in Portland shows that passage through the system for juveniles is as high as it was in 1964 before the last three Snake River dams were built. We're also seeing a lot of data that shows unknown ocean impacts and how climate changes out there are going to affect fish passage. There was a scientist from Canada that presented data in Portland the end of January to that effect, some very telling information.

Also, if dams were the problem, I don't think we'd see healthy fish runs in the Hanford Reach and I don't think we would see recovered fish in the Umatilla River. Those fish all have to traverse three federal dams to get home.

Lastly, drawdowns could be made a case to be environmentally harmful. Alternative power all will have more negative air pollution impacts than hydro does, whether it's coal or nuclear or gas or whatever we want to come up with.

Also, moving all of the commodities that are in the river to truck and rail will increase fuel consumption because those are less efficient forms of transportation and they will increase particulate emissions into the atmosphere impacting our air quality and so we'll be caught in a vise grip between fish recovery and air quality problems.

So with all those things said, I think the evidence is fairly clear and our association would strongly recommend to the Corps to suggest to Congress these studies not be continued to Phase II. Thank you very much.

**Stuart Stanger**: Thank you. Appreciate your comments.

**Bud Mercer**: Thank you. My name is Bud Mercer. I'm here representing Mercer Ranch. I didn't come here prepared to speak so I'll try to make this real brief. And thank you for those comments, cause they're right on target.

I want to talk about the cultural aspects because as a resident of the region, directly adjacent to John Day for most of my life, I want to tell you a little bit about how it was before the dam. Before the dam, Hermiston and surrounding area had a population roughly half the size that it is today. Tri-Cities region was roughly half the size it is today. Since John Day Dam has been constructed, roughly ten percent of the irrigated agriculture in Washington and Oregon is fed out of John Day pool. A lot of the economic growth that has created that population boom, boom I guess you'd call it if you look at it from my perspective, is directly attributable to what's happened out of the John Day pool.

I guess my point is, it's hard for me to believe that we would seriously consider a drawdown in John Day pool on the possibility that 30,000 salmon might spawn when we're looking at displacing more than 100 thousand people and enough agricultural production to feed two or three cities the size of Seattle, let alone the power and environmental impacts that would occur there. And all of you folks with as much gray in your hair as I've got have actually seen that happen and those of you from out of the region, and I just can't believe that you'd come in here and ask us to make that kind of sacrifice on the possibility that it might affect fish. Now I have to admit you're wearing me down because we've been at this for ten years, you know, and we have submitted to you folks enough evidence to show that drawdowns really don't do any good. When they wanted to go to what, minimum operating pool, industry got busy and helped produce enough science, enough reputable science, to show that that wouldn't do any good, and it was literally over the dead bodies of the Portland crowd who wanted to pool down John Day pool, but finally we got it off the table, and we thought, you know, we really got them to look at this issue.

Now here you are back again saying now, because we have 30,000 fish that might spawn and these are not even protected under ESA, it's just hard for me to understand how this is happening. You know, I guess I'm getting old. You're wearing me out. You know we have, you know from where Dick Bechtel is on the west end to where Agri-Northwest is on the east side, and all of the land in Oregon, there are 30,000 people that depend on that river, directly, let alone indirect. So, thank you for the opportunity.

**Stuart Stanger**: Thank you for your comments. Eric, do you want to respond to that?

**Eric Ostrovsky**: Well, all I wanted to say is that the benefits, and I wasn't trying to say the total benefit was to save, you know, potentially spawning or revive spawning habitat for 30,000 fish. The real idea is that drawdown of John Day Dam, it would be part of an overall strategy and it's a strategy that has … and it has the other 4 H's in it and the study would be a part of airing out all the issues that are needed in all those H's. Students here talked about that, too. It would be a joint effort I think by a lot of people in the region.

**Bud Mercer**: I have to respond to that. This issue has been absolutely studied to death. The issue has been studied to death. The side of multi-use of the river has won every single time. We're going to win again. I just can't believe that the federal government to whom we pay taxes forces us to go through this every damn year.

(Applause.)

**Everett Hamilton**: My name is Everett Hamilton. I'm a director of Benton REA and a farmer and have been involved in this issue quite a long time, and I have some questions I would like to ask you. You keep bringing up the habitat issues and different things like that, and my first question is to the Colonel, where I know there's been a lot of discussion about this island that the Corps created down on the mouth of Columbia that has the terns on it that eat the juvenile fish, and my question to that is, what is the plan to solve that problem?

**Bob Willis**: Yeah. I'm Bob Willis. I'm Chief of Environmental Resources for Portland District, and I've been involved with the Caspian tern issue. The issue of Caspian terns was another item that was addressed in NMFS Biological Opinion, and they recognize that these terns may be taking juvenile salmonids, so we had a study that had occurred over the last couple of years to try to determine what was the extent of that. Information that came in indicated that the terns were taking large numbers of juveniles, so in cooperation with U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service and the state Fish and Wildlife agencies, we had come up with a plan in terms of trying to address this tern issue. The terns are located on Rice Island in the Columbia River estuary. We are currently in the process of trying to move the terns. The terns will be coming back in towards the end of March, first part of April. We're moving them down onto an island further down toward the ocean where they had come into the estuary initially. The studies that we have indicated there's a larger prey base down there of fish so that they wouldn't just be eating juvenile salmonids. We have gone out and we have done grass seeding, cause the terns want bare sand to nest in, and this weekend we have the Marines coming on in to create habitat down on East Sand Island. This is the initial part of this. We are also working with these same agencies to come up with a long-term plan. It's our hope that these actions will significantly reduce the avian predation on juvenile salmonids.

**Everett Hamilton**: Okay. My second question is on another habitat issue which is the foreign fishing, and I've asked this question at half a dozen different meetings and had the same answer every time, but anyway, I think I'd like to direct this to Eric from NMFS. The foreign fishing off our coast, which I understand has been moved from the twelve-mile limit into the three-mile limit, inside the three-mile limit now, why does the federal government allow that, the same federal government that is requesting that we just do these studies to tear the dams down or is discussing tearing the dams down? Why do they allow foreign fishing?

**Eric Ostrovsky**: I am not exactly sure the fishery that you're referring to that's currently fishing if we're able to identify though I can try to get you an answer for it. At one point, I did troll for fish in Southeast Alaska. At that point, there were factory boats within our limits that did fish. Those are no longer fishing. We've had drift net fisheries that were intercepting a lot of fish. They are no longer in it, any longer, too. I'll admit those fisheries have had historic impacts on the taking of salmon. There may be fisheries right

now, American fisheries, that have an incidental take, but I'm not aware of an incidental take in the ocean fishery of listed fish other than some Alaska troll fishery, but if you know, I'm happy to look into that further. I'm just not sure which fishery you're referring to.

**Everett Hamilton**: Well, the studies and the people I've heard talk are talking about the 35,000 or 3,500 kilometers of foreign nets off the Oregon/Washington coast on a daily, nightly basis.

**Eric Ostrovsky**: That's currently going on?

**Everett Hamilton**: Yes.

**Eric Ostrovsky**: I'll try to find out from the fisheries management at the National Marine Fisheries Service what that could be referring to, but I couldn't give you a specific answer on that.

**Everett Hamilton**: Well, if that is going on, my question would be why would the federal government allow that because you know everyone that I've talked to says it is happening.

**Eric Ostrovsky**: I'd have to find out. I mean I could only speculate. I'm not sure, as I say, what that fishery is.

**Everett Hamilton**: Okay. Then my last question is, and I address that to any of you that want to answer it, but the sea lions that have became an endangered species in the last few years that have been harvesting a lot of the salmon, high quantities of salmon, my feeling on that issue is and I would like someone to answer is, is the federal government's position that sea lions eating the salmon are more important than the economics of the Northwest?

**Stuart Stanger**: I know I don't have anybody here to answer that question either. Dawn Edwards is going to hand you a card. If you'll write down your two questions there that we were unable to answer, we'll make sure that we do get answers to you.

**Eric Ostrovsky**: I hate sitting up there on the table but the National Marine Fisheries Service has jurisdiction over marine mammals, and they are protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and I know the service has been working on regulations where you have conflicts between marine mammals and endangered species, especially salmon, and I believe they've come up with certain protocols to ensure that that doesn't happen, that what we have is an increasing marine mammal population that's impacting steelhead, and I don't know exactly what it says on it. I do know that has been worked upon, and if I can, I'll try to get you information on exactly what's been going on. But it is real. It's a real issue and unfortunately you know that's what happens, especially when you have certain species like salmon or certain runs that do get reduced. But there has been some recent work that's been done with that.

**Dave Gordon**: Yes. I'm Dave Gordon with Northwest Graingrowers in Walla Walla, and I picked up some of the information, and I just wanted to make one comment on the navigation. When it says the John Day drawdown and on the back of it has the facilities that are included with secondary navigation features, I think you should also include any of the facilities that are in the McNary pool because if you can't get through the John Day pool, all of the Pasco area there will not be any barge facilities get to any of those, so I think that needs to be included in your study is all of the facilities that are up in the McNary pool and that is significant amount of movement, of transportation. Is that included, I guess. I don't see ...

**Stuart Stanger**: No, but it's one of the things we are looking at. Let me answer your question, and then I'll add to it. What we are looking at with regards to navigation is maintaining navigation so one of the alternatives we will look at is dredging a navigation channel from John Day to McNary. What would it cost to do that? That's what we'll develop. So under that scenario, navigation would continue up above McNary, okay? Now would that be feasible to do that? I can't answer that today, but we will be looking at that. But you're absolutely right. If there's no navigation going upstream, then certainly there's impacts further up. We are not, you've got to recognize in this Phase I study, what we're trying to do is find out whether drawdown should be considered. If it is considered and we do this feasibility study, we will be getting into a lot of details such as you're raising. Within a year's time, there's no way we could address everything. We know this study will not include everything that you can think of that should be included in a feasibility study. What we're asking ourselves is, do we have enough information in Phase I that we can make a recommendation to Congress? And recognize that when Phase I is done and handed to Congress, they will not have enough information to decide to draw down. The only decision they could make is do further study or stop studies. They will not have enough information. We will not profess to provide them enough information to decide to draw down.

**Dave Gordon**: But if you look at the economic issues, and that's a part of your report that you're handing to Congress, then you have to look at the McNary pool because that's going to be part of what you're trying to evaluate, and at least it should be mentioned in here and at least you can mention the number of facilities that are included in the McNary pool.

**Stuart Stanger**: Yeah, understand. If navigation were not possible through the existing John Day pool, if navigation were not possible, those facilities all the way upstream would be impacted, but we are going to cost out what it would cost to continue that navigation so navigation could continue into McNary, okay?

**Chuck Wierman**: Yeah, my name is Chuck Wierman. I'm just a Kennewick resident, and I guess I'm asking sort of the same question, and I choose these words carefully. How broad are you going to cast your economic net in this study because I believe just the fact that we're even having this discussion, you've already impacted my property values, and I would like to know who's going to send me the check?

**Stuart Stanger**: Yeah. We've heard that earlier and we've heard it in some earlier meetings. We understand that just the fact that the Corps has been tasked to conduct a study does have economic impacts. It causes companies to question whether or not to move into an area; it causes question of whether or not to make improvements to a pump station. It does have impacts and we realize that. We're sympathetic to that. We will assess regional impacts in this Phase I study; we have the opportunity to discuss regional impacts, not something that we would normally do in a feasibility study. Normally, the Corps would look at what's the economic impacts to the nation. That's different than regional impacts. We can discuss the regional impacts in this study, and we will.

**Louis Towne**: I'm Louis Towne. I'm a retired electric co-op manager, and one of the things that bothers me in some of these discussions is that it seems like whenever they try to find out where to put the money, the money cost of some of these things, they find a very convenient thing called the Bonneville Power program, and we've had, we started out with a $200 an acre cost for irrigated farms and in the last 15 or 20 years, there've been a whole lot of other things added in, and I'd like to see a more even breakout as to the various costs of these things rather than power. Just because we have low-cost power doesn't mean we have to pay for everything through the power cost.

**Stuart Stanger**: And thank you.

Tape changed at this point

….And Benton will be sending in some written comments later in the week. The first thing I looked at when I came in here -- I looked at the size of the crowd, and I go to all these meetings and I'm used to seeing about anywhere from 400 to 600 people come to these meetings, but I only saw a flyer just two days ago -- the first time I saw anything -- I track this pretty close. I didn't realize you all were going to have a meeting tonight, so I question how well advertised this was, because people that I'm used to seeing at meetings like this just aren't here tonight. Also, you know, some of the comments I've heard tonight -- the -- I didn't realize that reducing the level behind John Day would actually impact behind McNary. That was new to me, so, you know, there's a lot of people upstream of McNary that would have been here, I think, if they had known that that's a potential situation that they might face, the -- and I just don't think the average person in this area knows that that kind of impact can come from this kind of action that is being studied. The -- I look at the John Day pool as like a big shock absorber. You know, it's a shock absorber for flood control when you look at the floods we've had, like, I think it was three years ago, or two years ago, in -- with the work done with the Corps and the bureau, and Bonneville, they were able to prevent, I think it was up to something like $1.5 to $2 billion worth of damage to the Vancouver/Portland area. Yeah, that's a pretty significant impact. I hope that's considered in the studies, cause that can happen again. Also, the John Day is the last major dam where you can actually control the water, as I understand it. It's the last dam in the series of dams that are used for flood control, and so that's why I think of it as a shock absorber. The other aspect is when you think of the power system and transmission system, John Day Dam is really -- the generation there is

used to stabilize the federal based system, and I hope you're gonna study the impacts of what happens to the federal based system, if those generating resources are no longer there, and take a look at what happens to the intertie and then what happens to the contracts that we have -- you know -- the Northwest has with, say customers down in California to guarantee power going down on longterm power sales contracts -- things like that. How will that be replaced? And what I see is just a bunch of cascading economic impacts occurring, and I'm not clear in my mind anyway, just how many tiers out you will go in studying this issue and quantifying the numbers. Let's see, I guess that's really -- I don't want to repeat what other people have said, so that's all I have for right now. I'll put the rest in writing.

**Dawn Edwards**: I'd just like to make one comment, because I'm the person who is responsible for getting the word to all of you. I would suggest that you talk to your local media and ask why this wasn't publicized because we sent out three news releases, and we've made personal contacts, and if you didn't know about it, you have my apologies, but I suggest you talk to local media.

**(Audience member)** I just want to say, the last set of hearings that have been held here, there's been like three or four in the last six months -- they were very well attended, they were very well advertised by the federal organizations that were responsible for fielding those events, and I just was absolutely shocked at how poorly advertised this was and I can't accept that as an excuse.

**Dawn Edwards**: The key word is advertised, and we did not purchase advertising. We have learned from this and from now on we will, but we did not purchase advertising. We relied on the news value, and I apologize for that. We will purchase advertising; we didn't think we needed to in this case.

**(audience member)** Does that mean you should come back after you've advertised? Well what - and I don't want to get into the debate, but what I would suggest is instead of having meetings in Alaska and meetings in Montana, put that money for those programs into advertising here in Eastern Washington and Eastern Oregon.

(Clapping)

**Stuart Stanger**: Yeah, I don't want to get into a debate either, but there are Senators from Montana and Alaska who would strongly disagree with you. With regards to your comments on the power and the distribution system, that is part of the scope of this study, and BPA is working with us to identify those impacts.

**Richard Beightol**: My name is Richard Beightol. My wife and I are farmers and we farm with irrigation from the John Day pool. I'd just like to start out my comments by saying that I believe that the federal Columbia river hydro system is one of the greatest accomplishments of mankind on this earth and the benefits are immeasurable when you look at the economics, the recreation, the flood control. It's unimaginable for me to think about all of those benefits and to think that we might -- we in this room would allow

someone to tear that down and I'm not going to allow that to happen, and I hope none of you allow that to happen. I'd like to start out my comments with maybe a few questions -- why are we looking at drawdowns when we have the data, we have the science, if we look at the right model, that is, we have the science, that tells us that our transportation system is working and will accomplish the same thing, possibly better than this drawdown, as far as moving smolt or moving salmon through the system. I guess I don't understand that.

**Stuart Stanger**: Do you want me to answer that one first?

**Richard Beightol**: Sure.

**Stuart Stanger**: Eric?

**Eric Ostrovsky**: Everytime I get volunteered, I lose on this. Well, what I wanted to say is that I probably should have done a better job on this as I was describing things, but the Biological Opinon in 1995 that looked at the whole action of the power system had many reasonable and prudent measures in it, and the idea behind it was not to judge and weigh necessarily when looking at the longterm configuration at the cost to recover salmon. We had done that in 1994 with our Biological Opinion. We said then that there's only finite resources for recovery and this is what we would spend, and the Corps said no. The ESA to recover species does not look at the cost. We look at the activities to recover the species, but the cost can be tabulated. We did not know, and there's still a lot of information on the diverse and complex system for any species, necessarily what you're going to get back and what you're gonna get back for survival and recovery standards, and that's why we were looking, and why we're looking at this study. It is part of a whole number of reasonable and prudent measures within the Opinion, and basically what the Corps had asked of us and what NMFS is doing, is trying to implement all of those. And that's why we're looking at it and we do take it seriously as our responsibility. I'm not going to volunteer no matter what you ask.

**Richard Beightol**: Okay, I appreciate that answer. I'm not sure I understand all that, but I'll go on anyway. I guess you're asking us -- should we continue this study? What do we think about this activity? I say, we stop the study. Let's use the technology that we have. I don't believe at all in going back to normative rivers and I don't want to be back 50 years from now, and I guess I'm not hypocritical enough to think that somehow we can replace the generation of the John Day Dam or all the dams in the Columbia federal system with some solar generator or wind machine that's somehow going to be as clean and a renewable resource as the hydro system, so I'm saying NO, let's not study it any further. I think there's a desperate need for leadership and at times you can't be a good leader and be popular at the same time. So, I would implore upon you folks that are charged with this responsibility to be leaders, and I don't mean leaders that are measured by polls and say what's politically correct. I mean leaders are measured by results in the future, and the results in the future that I want to see is the system in place, generating clean power and providing opportunities for all of us and all of our children. I think we can study this issue and maybe we can drag it out for another five years or another ten

years. There are some meaningful things that we can do that I believe will help restore the salmon runs, and Pat has given you a list of new water management alternatives from the Columbia/Snake River Irrigators. I support those alternatives and would like to see the Corps pursue that, and with that I'll shut up. Thank you.

**Stuart Stanger**: Very good comments and you don't need to shut up unless you want to. But, thank you. Go ahead …

**Michele Rounds**: My name is Michele Rounds. I'm here -- I'm a resident of the Tri-Cities, just representing myself here this evening, and I share a lot of the same concerns that other folks have expressed, and therefore, do oppose further study of this issue, but I want to bring up something that nobody else has mentioned yet, and the significance isn't nearly what these other folks have spoken about tonight, but I moved here almost six years go because of the wind-surfing that exists on Lake Umatilla, and I could have chosen to live in the Hood River area or the Portland area, or somewhere like that, but the highest quality wind-surfing, maybe in the whole world, is on Lake Umatilla, and I'm not sure how you would quantify that or how you would put an economic value to that, but it is very valuable to me and hundreds of other people that like to wind-surf there. I also have maybe a request or something I'd like to see, maybe the gentleman from NMFS can point me in the right direction, but is -- there's a lot of talk about the methods for salmon recovery, but I think it would be very interesting to be able to see a -- like a hierarchy, or something that tells exactly what -- a hierarchy of what the problems are. What's taking the most salmon -- you know -- on down the line, because I seriously question how much impact the juvenile mortality caused by this particular dam really is in relationship to the whole salmon issue. Thank you.

**Stuart Stanger**: Thank you. There are ways that we capture the recreational benefits as I indicated. If you draw down John Day, your wind-surfing will change. You would have fast water recreation available but slack water recreation would be significantly impacted -- just a second -- with regards to your comment to Eric -- I'm not sure he can answer that today. Can you?

**Eric Ostrovsky**: No, I can't. I think it is an extremely good question. It's difficult to quantify. I mean I think, depending on any year, depending on the conditions and what's happening, you're gonna have different effects, in the H's themselves or what's going on in the river, and I think, historically over time, we would all agree now that there were mistakes made in the past that were probably very foolish, and we squandered valuable resources, but as far as, you know, what is happening and how it's occurring, you know there are attempts to be made so you can look and see what the impacts will be, but the debate goes on even today -- how do you weigh, for instance, the value of juvenile migrants -- how would you compare that to adults? And, you know, I agree, it's a difficult task. I know there is still a lot of disagreement among even the fish managers -- which is the most valuable, so I couldn't give you a real specific answer.

**Stuart Stanger**: Let me add just one more thing. Let me tell you what we are doing in this study. We are going to release some tagged fish. You know, Eric has mentioned

travel time through the John Day pool. We don't know whether that's a problem or not, but we're gonna release some fish and find out how long it does taken them to get from McNary to John Day to see if that is a problem.

(Question asked of Stuart, but not audible to transcriptionist.)

**Stuart Stanger**: No, we don't like to base any decision on one year of biology, but recognize that river is controlled flow, so we can control --there are a lot of instances where we have uncontrolled spill, but we are trying to capture what the impacts might be, caused by John Day. We don't know. That's part of what this study will do. We'll look at how much predation or how much mortality is there in the John Day pool. We're also looking at -- and we've got studies under … to determine how much, or let's say, estimate how much habitat might be recoverable from spawning habitat? We're trying to get at those questions as part of this study.

**Audience member**: I almost have to apologize before I ask this question, but I guess anybody can answer, but does it seem to be just a little bit bizarre that we're -- we're talking about sea lions that eat salmon and I don't know how many -- gillnets we've got across that river between Bonneville, and I've seen numbers, I guess I'd have to ask our economist exactly, but I mean -- it goes up to $900,000 per fish. Does anybody besides me feel that this is bordering on insanity? I mean, how do you sit here and talk about it so calmly as if this is normal? It's not normative to me.

**Stuart Stanger**: Somebody back in the back. Oh, go ahead.

**Darryll Olsen**: Good evening, Stuart, my name is Darryll Olsen, a resource economist with the Pacific Northwest Project located here in the Tri-Cities, here tonight representing the Columbia/Snake River Irrigators Association and the Eastern Oregon Irrigators Association. I had an opportunity to make several comments and ask several questions in Umatilla two days ago, so I won't bore you by repeating the comments or questions, but I do have four new questions I'd like to ask. The first question is to Eric and Eric, at Umatilla you indicated that in the current Biological Opinion -- '95 Biological Opinion that John Day pool drawdown, MOP, was in there, and that was an action item to be rescinded. You indicated, unless everyone in the room heard you wrong, that National Marine Fisheries Service is not going to pursue not only further review of that alternative, but that alternative is off the table. Is that correct?

**Eric Ostrovsky**: That's correct, Darryll, but after you left it was Fred who asked, and everyone who was remaining on the record -- so I was mistaken on that, so I'm rescinding that, though Bob, who is heavily involved in it feels, as a policy issue, it is not really being followed …

**Darryll Olsen**: Okay, then the Columbia/Snake River Irrigators have a request, and that is, they would like to receive a written response from National Marine Fisheries Service on what is the status of the John Day MOP drawdown alternative? Where is that in the decision-making?

The second question, Stuart -- at Umatilla I had asked the question about the development or criteria -- what criteria that you had for going into the Phase II study, and if we heard you correctly you said that there was no criteria available at this time, or none had been developed.

**Stuart Stanger**: Yeah, that's correct.

**Darryll Olsen**: Okay. How do you plan to involve participants in the development of that criteria prior to release of the draft study?

**Stuart Stanger**: I'm not sure we will establish any criteria. I threw out some numbers at the Umatilla meeting and what I said is that if there is a high probability of sustaining the fish runs or the fish salmon recovery in the neighborhood of 90% -- if there's a 90% chance that you could recover the salmon and the cost is $500 million, then you'd probably recommend going forward with the Phase II study. On the other hand, if you find out the cost is $3 billion and the probability of sustaining the fish run is only 10%, I said that I wouldn't buy that, and we're hoping for a black and white answer like that at the end of Phase I. If we don't have a black and white answer like that, -- if we're in the middle somewhere where it's a 60% probability and a billion dollars, I'm just glad I don't have to make that final decision. I'll have to make a recommendation, but that's going to be a much tougher decision that Congress will make, and I'm not sure that anyone could involve all of the public, organizations and agencies to come up with a consensus of whether results like that should recommend study or not. I don't think we could ever get consensus, and we've gotta have some leadership and someone will have to make those decisions. I'm hoping for a black and white answer, so my recommendation is an easy one, but I don't know where we're gonna come out on that, Darryll.

**Darryll Olsen**: Okay, if I understand the answer given here tonight then you're saying you're not going to establish any criteria for the recommendation.

**Stuart Stanger**: I guess what I'm saying is that if I have to establish a probability, whatever that is, 60% probability and X number of dollars as the cost, I don't know how to do that.

**Darryll Olsen**: Well, you're gonna have a tough, tough time, aren't you?

**Stuart Stanger**: If it's in the gray area I think the only recommendation would be that you would have to do additional studies.

**Darryll Olsen**: Okay. Well, I think another request from Columbia Snake River Irrigators - the board. They'd like to see what your plan is and how you're gonna develop the decision-making if not the criteria for the recommendation to enter into the Phase II study. They would like to know more about this. Something written from the Corps that discusses it.

**Stuart Stanger**: Yeah, we can provide you the scope of the study that Congress authorized; it includes that.

**Darryll Olsen**: We would like it a little more specific if you could. The third question -- Col. Slusar. You thought you were gonna get off. Okay. You heard the Board of Director (member) Mr. Tucker make a formal request on the Corps conducting a significant water resource alternative review, and requesting funding from Congress for that. The Board of Directors from Columbia/Snake River Irrigators, Eastern Oregon Irrigators are going to be going to Washington, D.C. in 30 days and do you see any reason why they can't receive a reply from the Corps within the next 30 days -- you know -- so they could go back and tell various Senators and Representatives how responsive the Corps is and what a good job they're doing -- that kind of thing. Could there be a response in 30 days?

**Col. Robert Slusar**: I don't think we can get through this and get the response back to you in 30 days.

**Darryll Olsen**: Okay. You can't send a response back saying whether or not you will be willing to engage or to request Congress on that kind of a study?

**Col. Robert Slusar**: Not within 30 days.

**Darryll Olsen**: Okay, how long would it take.

**Col. Robert Slusar**: I don't know ----

**Darryll Olsen**: One final question. Ed, you're working on hydropower?

**Ed Woodruff**: Yes.

**Darryll Olsen**: I got a call yesterday from Reservoir Control. You know Reservoir Control?
Whenever they call they never call to just say hi, how are you -- you doing okay -- everything all right? They always call with an issue. Well the issue this time was that they wanted to take John Day down to elevation 257, and as a result of that we had to contact a number of people. As you know, we're just about ready to enter the irrigation season, people are busy doing some pre-watering, and other things like that, so probably as a result of that call, there was probably, I would say, $5,000 to $10,000 worth of economic activity that was foregone, and then this morning I got another call, and it said, Reservoir Control again -- they didn't ask how I was doing, they just said they had some information again for us. And they said, you know, we're calling off that John Day study, or that John Day operation -- we're not going to do that. I said, well, why are you doing that, and they said, well, Bonneville Power Administration says they don't want to absorb the replacement power costs for that activity, so Bonneville told the Corps, don't draw down to 257, a 6-foot drawdown. The question I have is, if Bonneville Power

Administration is not willing to absorb a 6-foot drawdown for seven days, why the hell are you here now? I don't understand.

**Stuart Stanger**: Well, we are going to look at the total impact to the Bonneville system with the drawdown. I am totally unfamiliar with what you are talking about today. I assume it was a consideration of flood control to go to 257.

**Ed Woodruff**: Part of the reason they were talking about going down to 257 is that there is some construction going on in the John Day pool, and I'm not sure whether they're putting in a boat ramp or a boat dock, but they needed to do some blasting and it gets very complicated; it is a very complicated issue because it involves fish, and it involves whether or not we can physically draw John Day down that fast, and still pass the water through The Dalles and Bonneville. There are some units out at Bonneville that would not allow us to draw down to 257, so I don't know what happened today, but as of yesterday they were hoping to be down to 261 by Monday. Now, they could have changed that today, based on analysis they have done. It's a continuing evaluation and the construction still needs to be done.

**Darryll Olsen**: Well, I find it a little absurd that Bonneville is telling the Corps of Engineers that they are not even willing to absorb a short time economic hit for 6 days, a 6-foot drawdown, and then -- how many dollars is this gonna cost? Ed, you have a pretty good feel for it. What's the annual cost for something like this? Just the power.

**Ed Woodruff**: It will probably be pretty close to the Snake River results -- which are coming in at $250 to $300 million a year.

**Darryll Olsen**: Just curious.

**Stuart Stanger**: Yeah, you need to recognize -- I don't know what the dollar value of the assumed path to this drawdown is, but it is that impact versus a dock or a boat ramp, and so the trade-off there probably just wasn't justified.

**Van Walkley**: Yeah, I'm Van Walkley and I'm not - I don't live on the John Day. I live on the Ice Harbor pool, and we put in irritation -- my wife and I started irrigating in 1967. Now, we have -- in 1991 we needed to put some -- upgrade the system, and the banker has been very nervous all the time because the Snake River dams have been on the table since 1991, and really it's an economic impact and I don't know -- my wife kinda thinks I should stay home and farm instead of going to these hearings. I'm getting a little bit -- it's an economic impact that affects us. We attempted -- the place has been up for sale once, and it did not -- and that was one of the first questions that was asked. What's the Corps gonna do? Or what is NMFS gonna do? So, I know it would be a great help to those in the Tri-Cities and the Hermiston area to say, we're gonna stop this study, right now, because it would -- I don't have any idea how much -- the Corps puts the money in but how much the private industry puts in to either cooperative with the study, or come up with ideas, or attend these hearings. Thank you.

**Stuart Stanger**: Thank you for your comment.

**Earl Schewck**: Kennewick resident. I've just got a question about the levels that you have behind the dams there. As you get further down does your gas levels -- are they -- as water turbulence gets more, does it -- are we increasing more, or like even when you get down to natural levels, are we gonna have more gas in the water that is gonna affect the fish?

**Bob Willis**: We've had some gas abatement studies going on where we have been actually measuring gas development, and gas production is not simple, but what it's related to is spill at the projects. If you have more spill, then you will generate gas. Gas generally will dissipate the further you go downstream. Okay, now what we've tried to do recently is put in things that -- flow deflectors and that -- that would reduce the extent of gas, and so the amount of gas that's in the system, and how we can operate the system, has improved over the last several years, but generally the question that you're asking is the further you get downstream from a project the less gas you will have because it will dissipate.

**Earl Schewck**: Even when you get down to natural river flow where you get more turbulence?

**Bob Willis**: At natural river flow. Generally, if you're down at natural river flow where you have riffles and that, generally then that would benefit gas dissipation.

**Victor Moore**: I'm Victor Moore. I'm a local person. My wife, Bobbie. I don't want this evening to go by without at least one person taking an opposing view. I have heard all evening now in the comments people with vested interests, and I think that it's time that at least one person speak up and say, what is the consequences of the extinction of the salmon? Is that worthy of study? And, I've heard tonight the vested interests think that there should be no more money or industry put into that kind of a study. I want to say that I believe there should be; that I don't think we can take the consequences without studying it, and I for one, want to say that I want you to continue the study of this very vital interest. Thank you.

**Stuart Stanger**: Thank you.

**Doug Watts**: I'm Doug Watts. My brother and I have Watts Brothers Farms that we farm on the John Day pool. We started about 15 years ago, farming there on the John Day pool. At that time we had seven employees. Today -- and about 1000 acres of land. Today, we are farming 18,000 acres of land through acquisitions and have 300 to 400 employees, with 150 of them year around employees on the John Day pool. It is very important for us to know where we're at. Our financiers are all asking this question every day. Are we going to have water? It's very important for us to know where we're at. We are opposed to any more studies.

**Stuart Stanger**: Thank you. If there are no more questions, comments, I want to thank all of you for your comments, and I'm going to turn the meeting back over to the Colonel.

**Col. Robert Slusar**: Again, I want to thank you all for being here tonight. I know it's a tough issue. It's confusing for me sometimes, as being the Commander of a district; I have a mission also at the projects to increase the fish passage, and I am doing that today, as you heard, we are doing things and improvements at our projects to ensure that the smolts get down safe, and adults get up the river safely and swiftly. So, we are doing a number of things at our projects. I've also been given a mission from Congress to take on this study. As a good Army officer, I salute Congress, say, "Yes, Sir, I'll do that," and that's what we're here for, and hopefully you can help us and join our team to get through this process, because I have a mission to report back to Congress based upon the one-year study that they have told us to do, and provide them with the information, and we're gonna provide them with the best information we have available in this one-year timeframe to come up so that they can make an informed decision. And I think that's what is here tonight: we have heard you; we've heard your comments; we've heard your comments at the other places we have been at, and we take those comments seriously. So, again, I do appreciate your comments tonight, and we're looking again at those benefits and those impacts, and we're gonna do the best job we can to get the best decision in the timeframe allowed, and I appreciate it, and appreciate your time here tonight. Thank you.